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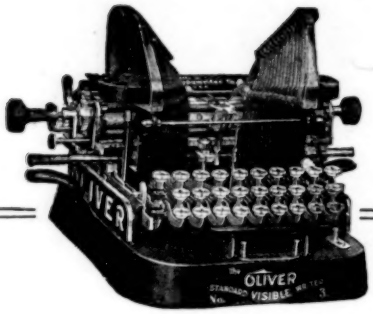

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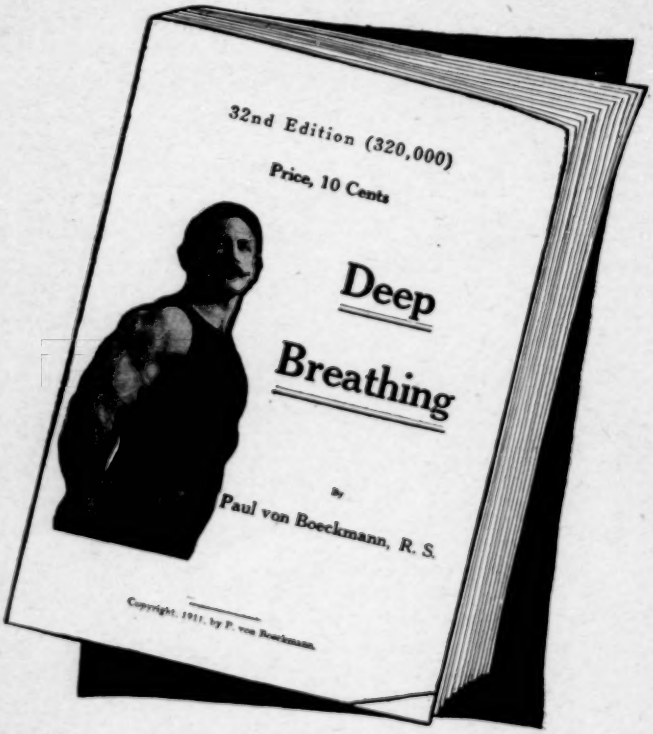

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The Black Cat

A Monthly Magazine of Original Short Stories

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Vol. XVIII., No. 7
Whole No., 211

APRIL, 1913

10 cents a copy
$1.00 a year

Entered at the Post-Office at Salem, Mass., as second-class matter.

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One Over Infinity*

BY DONALD BREED

YEARS ago Delaney's Book Shop used to do a thriving business on Michigan Avenue near Jackson. It was an odd little place, musty and dusty, but packed from ceiling to floor with the most astonishingly valuable old parchments and sheep-covered chap-books. Why, a single window display, I have been told, was at one time appraised at over six hundred thousand dollars. Be that as it may, I myself should never have given a puff of smoke for Delaney's entire stock. I am not interested in book-shops as a rule, but I shall always remember Delaney's with a sort of mournful interest, for it was in front of Delaney's display window that I first met with Pierre Lachenais.

I was returning home from the theatre on a cold gusty night in December. The street was deserted. I had stayed in the box office for an hour after the performance talking with the manager of the theatre about the condition of his brother who had just been committed to the state hospital for the insane. I had been the man's family physician for several years, having stepped into my father's place after his death, and now that I had turned all my energies to the study of abnormal mental states I was all the more in demand for consultation. Poor man! He was quite broken up over the condition of his brother. I supposed I stayed in his office longer than I intended for it was after midnight when I emerged from the

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foyer of the theatre and started toward the elevated station.

As I passed Delaney's, there was a lone figure gazing wistfully at the brightly lighted window with its artistically arranged tomes and manuscripts. My curiosity impelled me to stop and see what kind of a customer he might be. Just why I do not know, for there was snow on the ground, the wind came sweeping down the boulevard with the utmost ferocity, and I was in a hurry. But no sooner had I glanced at the man's face than I stopped still, paralyzed, and forgot cold and everything else for the moment.

Pierre Lachenais was a small dark man with shining black hair, dark, hollow cheeks, thin lips, and eyes—well, it is quite impossible to describe those eyes. When he turned and looked full at me, they seemed to spread over his whole face and swallow up everything else. There was a glitter in them that quite frightened me, and I had to collect my wits hastily.

"Ah, monsieur," he said, in a low, even tone, which I afterward found to be characteristic of Pierre, "ah, monsieur, you are interested in them too?"

"N-no," I stammered, "not particularly, that is."

"Ah, indeed." Pierre smiled. "But only look at those books on mathematics! That single book of the Theorems of Fermat is worth hundreds of dollars! Oh, if I only possessed it, monsieur!"

"Few of us can afford such a price as that," I told him consolingly. And then, with sudden inspiration, "Why, if you are so eager to get these old books on mathematics, why don't you discover the famous French safe-blower and get the reward that is being offered by the police authorities?"

His reply staggered me.

"Because, monsieur, I know the safe-blower and he is a very dear friend of mine."

"What!" I almost shouted, "you know the man, and yet you refuse to tell the authorities?"

"I shall never tell," said Pierre laconically; "he is a friend of mine."

"He is a miserable rascal if he *is* your friend. I read just this morning that he is suspected of the Blue Island Avenue Bank robbery beside all the rest of them. Think of all the poor people that had their savings there! Besides," I concluded, "the reward is twenty-five thousand dollars, offered partly by the Chicago Bank."

"I shall never tell."

"You are a poor sort of a citizen."

"But I am a good friend."

I afterward had reason to believe that this fidelity of Pierre's was mostly assumed.

"There is something else—" Pierre leaned nearer to me, "I will tell you frankly, monsieur. I am afraid of ghosts."

I drew back, a little frightened. Clearly, the man was crazy. He went on speaking.

"Just look in the gutter," he said rapidly, and in a low constrained whisper, "there is one of them right here."

I let him lead me to the curb, and he pointed down in the snow of the gutter. I looked, and an icy-cold horror spread over me. The man was right! There in the gutter, wallowing in the blood that ran from a huge gash in his forehead, lay a man. I looked at Pierre and then at the apparition, and almost felt my senses leave me. But the dark little Frenchman suddenly broke into mocking laughter and sped away around the corner as if he had been swallowed up in the flurry of snow. I looked into the gutter, dazed. There was no dead man there. Frightened and disgusted, I turned and hastened toward the elevated station, breaking into a run as I went.

* * * * * * *

My brother and I occupied a small apartment on the North Side near Lincoln Park. The flat building was new and the suite over us had been unoccupied since the structure had been built. A few days after my encounter with the Frenchman some lodgers moved in. I could hear them tramping up and down the stairs all evening, and occasionally I heard a man giving orders in a low, musical voice. About nine o'clock in the evening my door-bell rang and I went to the speaking tube.

"Is this Doctor Walstram?" said a far-away voice.

"Yes, I am Doctor Walstram," I replied.

"I am coming up to see you," said the man, and immediately after I heard him on the stairs. I met him at the door and recognized him as Dick Trim, a private detective and an old acquaintance of mine. I had several times worked with him on cases of criminal insanity.

"Hello, Dick!" I exclaimed, delighted to see him.

"Hush!" he said quietly, and, coming in, he closed the door behind him.

"What's up now?" I helped him off with his overcoat and hung it in a warm spot near the radiator.

"A whole lot," said the detective. "I believe we have got track of the man that blew up the Blue Island Avenue Bank."

"You don't say so," I answered, thinking of my strange encounter with the Frenchman.

"At least we know this much. A man with a long white beard was seen to climb out of the cellar window of the next building just about two hours after the explosion. That was at five in the morning, you remember, and when Mr. Clarkson broke into the bank there were no traces of the thieves. Well, about seven, Mrs. Haggerty, who lives in the next street, was standing on her back porch. She saw a queer-looking old man with a long white beard climb out of the cellar of the next building, she says. He was carrying a straw suit-case and he went down the alley way to the next street. I tell you what, Doc, it was a blundering piece of work."

"Why blundering?"

"Because the imbecile woman didn't open her mouth about it until two days after. It is too late to do anything in proper style. But—as it happens—" He leaned forward with an air of mystery. "Strangest coincidence you ever heard of, Doc. I was in the office of Macpherson and Brooks this morning and an old party of just exactly that description came in and rented an apartment. He had even the straw suit-case. Now the oddest part of the whole business is that he rented—let me see—433 Ash Grove Avenue—yes, that's it—right overhead here!"

"Good heavens," I exclaimed, "they are moving in here this evening!"

"Precisely," said the detective. "You don't mind if I stay here this evening with you, do you, Doc?"

"You know you are more than welcome," said I, almost resenting his words.

"Thank you," he said. "Now let's sit down and have a game of chess. By jove, Doc, I don't think we've played since—"

"Not since the night Mrs. Carter was murdered."

"Right you are."

I got out the board and chess-men and we began to play.

Meanwhile the tramping on the stairs continued. About an hour might have elapsed when there came a gentle knock at my door. I went to answer it and there—of all men in the world—stood the dark little man I had met in front of Delaney's Book Shop. I fancied that he was annoyed when he saw me. Probably if he had known where he was he would not have knocked, but it was too late and he proposed to make the best of the matter.

"Ha!" he said politely, "it is you, monsieur!"

"Yes," I said, bowing stiffly; "will you come in?"

"Only for a moment, monsieur," was the answer. "I came to borrow a corkscrew."

"Pray come in," I said, "and meet my friend, Mr. Trim—Mr.—?" I waited for him to introduce himself.

"Lachenais," he said sweetly, "Pierre Lachenais. The pleasure is all of mine."

I wondered if Pierre might have heard of my friend the detective, but he was a small man in his profession and I knew I was safe. If Pierre had ever heard the name it did not appear to annoy him to be thrust into the man's company. He and Dick sat and chatted while I went to get the corkscrew. As I came back through the corridor strange words fell on my ear. Had Trim actually been imprudent enough to bring up the subject of the safe-blowers? But it appeared later that Pierre himself had started the conversation about them.

"Yes, I knew the man," said Pierre, smiling, as the detective strove to conceal his agitation, "I knew him. He is, or was, a friend of mine. But now I know that he has gone back on me, and since I need the money I have half a mind to discover him to the police—the wretch!"

"If you do not, sir, we shall be compelled to hold you," said Trim warmly.

Pierre laughed lightly, rolled up his eyes, and shrugged his shoulders.

"I assure you it would do no good. I am exceedingly stubborn, monsieur. No torture chamber could draw anything from me if I wanted to conceal it."

"Humph!" said Trim, with visions of the third degree fresh in his memory.

"Furthermore," continued Pierre, "the criminal is far away now. I know where he is and I will tell you, but he could not get back here in less than two weeks. I must have my reward now, however."

"Not until we see the man," said Trim.

"I promise to deliver him," said Pierre smiling. "I have never broken a promise, monsieur."

"Thanks awfully," said Trim with cutting sarcasm, "but promises aren't our stock in trade."

"But a promise from myself, monsieur, might have something more to recommend itself."

I rather admired Pierre's insolence, but it only disgusted Dick Trim.

"I know nothing about you," he said. "You would probably take the money and hike for Tahiti. I shall have to stipulate that you are not to be out of the company of myself or one of my assistants until the time is up."

"Excellent!" said Pierre unexpectedly.

"Where is he?"

"No. 7 Rue Bourge, Avignon."

"Is he an old man—?" Trim began.

"Yes, monsieur, with a long white beard, and he most frequently carries a straw suit-case."

"Very well."

Next day two men left on the Twentieth Century Limited to catch the "Mauretania" which sailed Saturday, and Pierre took up quarters in Trim's apartment for the coming weeks. No sounds came from the flat overhead, but there were steps on the stairs occasionally, so I judged that it was not deserted.

* * * * * * *

About ten days later Dick Trim walked into my office one morning to tell me about Pierre.

"There is certainly something very strange about him," he said. "Yesterday he hypnotized the cook and she served us up a stewed dictionary at dinner instead of the roast."

I opened my mouth wide.

"And then the way he has been spending his money is simply outrageous. He told me the other day, 'Monsieur, I spent five thousand dollars yesterday, and I hardly knew it.' I asked him why he was spending it all, and he muttered something about revenge and violent death and he had better get his pleasure out of it while he could."

"How has he spent it?" I inquired.

"I haven't kept track," replied Trim, "but he hasn't let a day go by without spending more than a thousand. He has a whole new wardrobe and a fur-lined coat that is certainly the envy of my soul. And every night he gives a box party at some theatre. Goodness knows who his guests are— some strange foreign-looking creatures. And he never gets home till morning and hardly sleeps at all. I tried to trot around with him for a couple of days but the pace was too much for me. I've had some of the other boys on the job since."

"Drunk most of the time, I suppose?"

"No, not once. Sober as a judge. He never loses his head."

"Dick," I said suddenly, "I have been trying to figure out why on earth they ever paid him his reward in advance."

Dick looked dubious.

"Somehow I can understand everything when I'm with Pierre," he mused.

"Well, Dick," I said, "I wish you all good luck, but I'm afraid you've got a lunatic on your hands."

Dick said he hardly knew what to think.

"Do you want me to tell you what I think?" I asked him.

"Why, yes," replied the youngster, throwing me a curiously condescending smile as if he wanted me to understand that my opinions were not of much consequence.

"Well," I said, "I think Pierre is the criminal himself and I've thought so all the time."

There was a pause during which Dick did not smile.

"I guess we didn't think so when we paid him the reward," he said briefly.

One day about three weeks later I was suddenly impelled by a wild curiosity to know what had been the result of Pierre's gay round. I had not heard that the officers had returned from Avignon, but such was the case, and when I reached Trim's flat I found everything in an uproar. The Frenchman had locked himself in his room and barricaded the door with a bookcase. Inside he could be heard singing little snatches of French love-songs.

"Any word?" I cried to Trim on the threshold.

"Put-up job," he replied with drooping countenance. "There's no such street and number in Avignon."

"At least," I said nervously, "you know that Pierre is in there because you can hear him."

Dick sighed. "Yes. He couldn't possibly get out of the window, for it's a sheer drop of three stories onto a cement pavement. I've forced the lock and we're going to push over the bookcase directly. I'm glad you happened in, Doc."

"He's a bad one," said one of Trim's colleagues, who was assisting. "I won't be the first one to go into that room. I bet the first one that does is a dead man."

"Nonsense," said Trim sharply; "all you fellows get behind the bookcase. Ready!"

The bookcase was a huge, many-shelved piece of black walnut, and it was a marvel that Pierre had been able to move it alone. It went over with a crash, and there sat Pierre at a table at the other side of the room smiling at the intruders.

"Good day, gentlemen," he said blandly. "Have you come to see me and receive my confession? If so, I will not disappoint you. It was I who blew up the Blue Island Avenue Bank, the Chicago Bank, the —" Pierre launched into a minute catalogue of his crimes. Some that he mentioned we had never heard of, and I have since thought that probably he added them for greater effect.

Trim and I caught hold of each other for support and the young assistant's eyes nearly popped out of his head.

"Come, monsieur, with your cruel cell," said Pierre, as Trim advanced upon him with the handcuffs, "come and shut me up." He smote his heart after the fashion of a tenor in grand opera. "Come and put out the light of my life. But first wait. Let me show you that I have not been idle. I have started upon the performance of a great service for the human race. I have been working out a great mathematical problem, messieurs."

"Oh, come along," Trim said roughly.

"If you will only let me live I shall probably be able to finish it one of these days. Only see, monsieur!" He plucked eagerly at my cuff. "I am working on the solution of the great proposition that one over infinity approaches zero as its limit."

"Well—of all crazy dogs!" exclaimed the assistant detective.

"I do not care what you ignorant creatures say," said Pierre with the far-away glitter of madness in his eyes. "I know I am doing a great service for the human race. You abuse me and persecute me. So did they try the soul of Galileo, yet he continued to say that the earth moved. So did they use Savonarola, the monk. See! I have started with the fraction 1 over 2 and by increasing the denominator by one each time I am gradually approaching infinity. I have reached the fraction 1 over 8,399,437,621. See!"

He showed us sheets and sheets of paper covered with his computations.

"Is it not a noble work, monsieur?" said the criminal with some pride. "I shall work at it a few years more and then I shall have reached one over infinity. Then I can prove to the unbelieving world that one over infinity equals zero."

You could have knocked Trim over with a wisp of hay and I confess that I myself was a little giddy. For a moment Dick stood speechless. Then he turned and curtly asked the younger man to bring in the strait-jacket. He and I stood looking at Pierre when all at once a very extraordinary thing occurred. There was a tremendous explosion which seemed to rock the building to its foundations. Trim uttered a cry and rushed to the window. There,

streaking across the roof of the next building was an old man with a long white beard carrying a straw suit-case. I saw him myself from where I stood, and the most outlandish thing of all was that when he reached the edge of the gravel roof, he jumped off as unconcernedly as if he were stepping off a curb-stone. Both of us rubbed our eyes and Pierre affected astonishment. Almost immediately the other detective returned.

"The explosion! Did you hear it?" cried Trim.

"Explosion? I heard no explosion. When? Where?"

He held out the strait-jacket and, with a mocking laugh, Pierre held out his arms and walked into it.

* * * * * * *

Of course I never forgot Pierre for so unusual a character one does not meet every day. But I had not thought of him for many days when it happened that I had occasion one afternoon to visit the county insane asylum. As most of my work was done at other institutions I had not been at Dunning for some time and they told me of a strange new case they had there.

I transacted the routine business which had brought me to Dunning and then went to see the strange patient. Fancy my delight on discovering Pierre! I thought he looked rather paler than when I had seen him on the day of the explosion, and his dark orbs glittered more than ever. I controlled myself and refused to look at them.

"How are you, Pierre?" I asked, avoiding his glance.

"Can it be possible!" said Pierre in a pleased tone. "Have you come to take me away? I am really becoming sick of these monotonous surroundings. But I have got on well with my work."

"Indeed?"

"Oh, yes, to be sure. I am approaching one over infinity. I have now reached one over—" He started to read the figure but as it began with some decillions I angrily cut him short.

"Is it not a noble work?" he said cheerfully. "It is something that I shall always be remembered for."

"Look here, Pierre," I said, foolishly thinking to extort at least one sane remark from him, "you are talking nonsense and you know it. You have committed a crime and you are trying to escape the consequences. Wouldn't it be better to go to the pen and serve your time like a man than stay here shut up with a houseful of lunatics?"

"I am approaching one over infinity," faltered Pierre.

"Nonsense!" I cried. "Have confidence in me, Pierre. I won't give you away. You can trust me."

"I am approaching one over infinity," said the man dully, pointing to a stack of sheets scribbled over with figures.

"You are approaching dementia yourself, I verily believe," said I to myself, and Pierre kept on droning.

"I am approaching one over infinity," he said stupidly.

I gave him up and was on the point of leaving. When my hand was on the latch of the door Pierre burst out laughing. I turned back unpleasantly affected. There he sat thoroughly enjoying himself at my expense. I went out and I could hear his peals of laughter echoing down the empty hall.

* * * * * * *

Long after, I was plowing my way along the snowdrifts on an out-of-the-way street in Dorchester, near Boston, one night. Vacant lots stretched on each side of me.

"What a place for a hold-up!" I thought to myself, and, no sooner had the thought presented itself than I became aware of the approach of a second party. He came from behind a billboard and sped noiselessly after me. I turned at bay, expecting a blow or shot, and the snow-hung trees shone blood-red before me. Something sparkled in the darkness, but there was no blow or shot. The man cowered beside me and caught my arm.

"Hold me," he cried, "I am frightened! Look!"

I struck a match and looked where he pointed in the snow, and I tell you— I tell you I saw it. There was a dead man, cold, stiff, and white, with a yawning gash in his forehead. The match went out. I struck another quickly and held it to the man's face. A gust blew it away but not before I had seen Pierre's features. The light was gone but the glitter of his eyes pierced through the darkness. He turned and ran away.

"Pierre Lachenais!" I cried.

"Yes, monsieur," he called back to me; "a pleasant evening to you!"

I never learned how he escaped from the asylum and I have never seen or heard of him since. He was gone and so was the dead man in the snow, but I saw them—I tell you I saw them just as you see this page before you.

A Rustic Riddle.*

BY JAMES EDMOND CASEY.

DOWN by the "dee-po" D. Tallyrand Hinckle, the merchant prince of Vallejo, was sweeping out and polishing the showcases of his "Diamond Palace." It was one of those rare mornings in June when 'Frisco bay was one clear call to all in sun-drenched Vallejo to be out and upon it in any manner of craft. So Pa Hinckle pulled the shades on the windows half down, to create an atmosphere cool and inviting in the store.

For Disraeli Tallyrand Hinckle was proud of his "Diamond Palace." It was the only store in Vallejo that was a sure enough store, and not a bazaar for everything, with the crackers and cheese of the grocery department displayed on top of cases of women's apparel! It purveyed only to the jewelry trade and, outside of the town barber shop with its myriad mirrors, was Vallejo's chief boast.

Mr. Pa Hinckle eyed himself carefully in a wall mirror, tightened the red scarf about his white, celluloid collar, gave an extra quirk to his slick haircomb—and was ready for the first customer of the day.

In the space of waiting—and it might prove a long wait—Disraeli Tallyrand busied himself with a small morocco leather case at the far end of the counter. This was the apple of Pa Hinckle's eye. For in the crimson plush thereof, were imbedded twelve rings capped with diamonds, not wonders in size or beauty, but genuine beyond a doubt. The most valuable part of Hinckle's stock, he had brought them and three others in a quixotic fancy from San Francisco when, years before, he had first gone into business in Vallejo.

In all that time he had sold but three, and these not to the rustic population, but to extravagant sailors from battle-ships in the great Mare Island Navy Yard. Notwithstanding, Hinckle found intense delight in flashing them before his townsmen's saucer eyes,

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extolling their merits and their price, or in fingering them in solitary artistic joy.

And this last he was doing when a battered one-horse shay rattled and swayed through the heat, and came to a standstill before the doorway of the "Diamond Palace." A tall, lumbering calf of a man got laboriously out and, dragging a buxom, sun-bonneted girl after him, shambled into the store. Both were munching red-cheeked, luscious "mountain apples."

They came to an abashed halt in the middle of the store. At Pa Hinckle, standing expectantly behind the counter, the big rustic gazed helplessly a moment, the while he swung the girl's hand back and forth. He started to open his mouth to speak, paused, looked at the girl, snickered, and took a huge bite out of the apple. She giggled and began munching rapidly at her apple. She had one of the clearest complexions Pa Hinckle had ever seen, even among the country-folk, and now it was suffused with a high red blush.

"Well, my young people, what can I do for you?" Pa Hinckle broke suavely in upon the silence.

The girl nudged the big fellow, then fell to her apple again. He changed his weight from one foot to the other, looked at the girl, took a savage bite of the apple and said:

"Her paw, he said it'd be all right. An', my paw—wal, y'u see, th' crops were good this year, an' paw, he up and gave me th' money. An' Angela — that's Her — she said all th' gals has rings what's engaged. So I —"

"Oh, that's it. You want a ring, eh?" and Pa Hinckle breathed a sigh of relief at finally learning what the big bumpkin wanted.

"Now, what kind do you wish?" he went on, business-like, and made to close the morocco leather case to show them the cheaper ones. But an inarticulate sound from the dairy maid stopped him.

"If y'u please, mister," blurted the rustic, then losing his voice, he stuck out a finger at the leather case, and went red to the roots of his straw-colored thatch.

"Well, well," laughed D. Tallyrand, "so it's a diamond ring. Come, look at these," and he spread open the case.

They eyed the gems with awe and joy unconcealed on their country faces. Finally the girl left off her munching to nudge her companion once more.

"Angy says — I mean, mister, could we hold them rings in our hands? Just tuh look at, mister?"

Pa Hinckle laughed outright at the poor fellow's pathetic look of appeal.

"Why, to be sure, to be sure," he said. "Try them on her finger if you want."

At which, the bashful countryman began shoving the different rings on the dimpling fingers of the girl. As each ring slipped on or stuck fast at the knuckle, she would give an incoherent cry of delight, and then munch avidly at her apple to hide her joy and confusion.

At last the big fellow picked up the jeweler's chief pride — a large sized solitaire diamond, which, with a cluster of three, he prized most highly of his "pets." The solitaire just slipped over her knuckle, fitting the finger to a nicety, whereupon she emitted an audible "Ah!" and doubled the digit so that the ring could not be withdrawn.

The youthful farmer leaned down and eyed the ring on the fat little finger for a long moment. Then, at a nudge from the girl, he looked up at Pa Hinckle and grinned sheepishly.

"Angy wants that one," he explained, and she nodded vigorously. "Now, if y'u please, mister," a look of appealing interrogation stealing into his blue eyes, "how much is that?"

Disraeli Tallyrand Hinckle did not have to pause to answer. Times without number he had boasted of the price of this solitaire to the gaping crowd "down to the dee-po."

"One hundred and forty-five dollars," he replied.

The big fellow's eyes went a degree wider. He looked from Pa Hinckle to the girl, and down at the ring, and then back at the waiting D. Tallyrand. Then he took another bite from the apple.

"My paw," he began. Then he stopped, colored once more to the roots of his unkempt hair, and lumbering slowly to the door, cast his apple into the street. The girl followed him with appealing eyes.

When he had shambled back, he seemed to have got control of himself.

"He gave me only a flat hundred dollars, my paw did," he said. "My paw, he thought that'd be enough. But I can get th' rest fr'm him. Y'u see, th' crops were good this year, an' —"

"Oh, that'll be all right, all right," broke in D. Tallyrand. "I'll hold this ring just for you. And you can call for it with the money later today, or any time you so dispose."

Then, with sorrowful, dimming eyes, they watched him remove the ring from the girl's yielding finger. After which, the country

swain, to conceal his chagrin, grabbed the girl by the hand and pulled her toward the buggy.

Pa Hinckle followed to the window out of pure curiosity to watch the strange pair. He saw the girl feed her apple core to the horse. Then she looked about for the apple the man had discarded.

But it appeared nowhere to be seen. Both searched the pavement and gutter and seemed greatly exercised over its loss, until they caught sight of D. Tallyrand behind the window. Summarily the search was dropped, albeit the rustic patted the lean horse's head as if to make amends for the core he had failed to receive. Then they drove off in the swaying shay in a cloud of dust.

Disraeli Tallyrand Hinckle came back to the morocco leather case. Placing the rings back in the crimson plush, he found that one was missing — the cluster of diamonds, his most costly prize. He lifted up the case, just a bit excited. It was not on the showcase beneath.

Had the girl left with it on her finger? he wondered. No, of that he was sure, for he himself had withdrawn the last ring from her hand. Her companion — could it be that that big country boob had taken it?

Mr. Disraeli Tallyrand Hinckle for the nonce was thoroughly stumped. He could not find it in him to suspect the rustic couple of deliberately making off with his ring. They appeared too innocent and countrified for that. But if, through some mischance, they had left with it in their possession, he had no doubt but that speedily they would return it.

However, as he waited and waited through the long, languorous day, and no bashful swain or blushing maid appeared, his fears and anxiety grew apace. So that when he closed the "Diamond Palace" that night, D. Tallyrand Hinckle was in no gentle humor.

He could not understand how it was that those simple rustics had swindled him out of that ring, — let alone just how the thing had been accomplished.

And, a sadder and a wiser man, he made for home where it was as sure as fate someone would pay the penalty for his discomfiture.

And just so surely, the brunt of it fell on the small shoulders of Gladstone Machiavelli Hinckle, the seventh son of the house — which same should show you now why D. Tallyrand was called "Pa" Hinckle.

But about Machiavelli. That youthful heir arrived late for the family dinner and, added to that, his face was scratched on the

right cheek. So all Pa Hinckle's pent-up fury burst forth on the tousled head of poor Hinckle Junior No. Seven.

"Young man," went the volley of questions, "why so late for dinner? Riding, eh, in Tad Sawyer's father's candy wagon! Nice business, nice business, when there is home-work to be done and chores to be attended to. Oh, well, that will be seen to in good season. Now, where did that cut on the cheek come from? Fighting or pulling some poor little girl's hair,— what?"

Machiavelli to this failed to answer. The father saw he was on the wrong tack. In gentler tones, he asked for an explanation.

Still Machiavelli hesitated. Pa Hinckle realized something untoward was in the wind. To hear what it was, he promised immunity from punishment — Pa Hinckle possessing a well developed bump of curiosity.

So, with a bit of coaxing, Machiavelli told how, while passing his father's store that morning, on his way to school, an apple had smote him on the face.

"An apple!" exclaimed Pa Hinckle! "H'm, that country loon! But the scratch — where did you get that scratch?"

"From the apple," answered young Hinckle. "An' I picked it up—I couldn't see why it should cut me nohow. And gosh! In one side of it, sticking out, I found a ring!"

"What! my diamond cluster!" The elder Hinckle excitedly jumped to his feet. "What — where is it?"

Machiavelli suddenly growing nervous, rubbed the stubbed toe with the rag on it against the instep of his bare foot.

"I ain't got it, Pa,—I—I swapped it to Tad for his skates, a jack knife with a corkscrew in it, his aeroplane model, an ice-cream cornucopia, a ride in his dad's candy wagon, an'—"

But Pa Hinckle did not hear the rest of his seventh heir's deal in barter. Hatless and in his shirt sleeves he leaped out of the house and made down Spring Street for Roscoe Sawyer's house.

'Coe Sawyer, besides being Vallejo's chief sweet-meat merchant, was its town marshal as well. When D. Tallyrand gasped up to the tree-enveloped home, he took quick note of a light behind the blinds of the parlor windows.

"Company!" he snapped. "Well, I hope that kid's still got my ring!"

Without ceremony, Pa Hinckle opened the front door and burst into the parlor. Grizzle-haired 'Coe Sawyer was there, and little Tad and a third party in the shape of a tall, well-dressed, citified appearing stranger. Somehow, even in Hinckle's excitement, his

face seemed familiar — but D. Tallyrand did not stop to consider a detail of that kind, for on his precipitate burst into the parlor he had glimpsed his diamond ring in 'Coe Sawyer's palm.

"That's mine!" he gasped. "My diamond ring! 'Coe, your son swapped with my Machiavelli for it, but 'Lee did not know its value. I've run over here —"

"But this man says it belongs to him," interposed the candy-man. "Cool down a bit, Hinckle, and we'll talk it over. He says he bought it from you and lost it near your store. He saw Machiavelli and my Tad here swapping down by the dee-po, so he came to see me."

Disraeli Tallyrand Hinckle gave the man a sharp look, then started. The fellow had risen hurriedly to his feet.

"Where's your companion, my country friend?" said Pa Hinckle, sarcastically,—"the little butter and cheese lady? Who couldn't talk, I'm thinking, because she was laughing so at your play-acting?"

Roscoe Sawyer's mouth was wide open in amaze — the tall stranger fidgeted toward the door.

"There's some mistake here," he said nervously, — "some mistake — I think —"

Disraeli Tallyrand Hinckle rose to the situation. Turning to the dumfounded candy dealer, he said authoritatively,

"You're the town marshal, 'Coe—well, then, put this man under arrest until I have finished. Then I'll bet you'll lock him up!"

* * * * * * *

And so they found that it needed only a wig and a change of clothes to transform the black-haired citified stranger to the country bumpkin of the morning, and D. Tallyrand Hinckle proudly bore home the precious diamond cluster ring.

And the next morning a tall, well-dressed chap was ceremoniously escorted to the outgoing train and politely requested to remain away indefinitely —,while behind the big barn after school, that day, little Tad and the seventh son of Pa Hinckle engaged in a real sure-enough fist fight.

Unto Him That Asketh*

BY LOUISE HUSTON

"COME right in, Miss Hetty," called Aunt Mandy, at my rap on the screen door of her kitchen. I had run over by the back way to borrow a bonnet pattern, and found her seeding cherries. She did not get up to welcome me. "Take a chair Miss Hetty, and talk to me here, and I'll finish these while I have my hands in them.

"You want my bonnet pattern," she said, after I had made my wants known. "And so you don't like to borrow," after I had expressed myself as being opposed to borrowing. "Why, Miss Hetty, you're welcome to it. And now, do you know, I think to borrow once in a while is just neighborly. But no one ever comes to borrow from me but I think of the time your Uncle Abner and I undertook to break the Coxes of borrowing."

I pulled my chair up close to Aunt Mandy, and putting a newspaper across my lap, commenced to help her with the cherries, for I knew she was going to tell me a story worth hearing. The bonnet I was going to make that morning could wait.

"It was your Uncle Abner's idea, and I hated mightily to do it; for I don't like to hurt anyone's feelings, most of all poor folks'. But then, the Coxes didn't borrow just because they were poor, but because it got to be a habit with them, and they borrowed morning, noon, and night and between times.

"What did they borrow? Everything. Sometimes I'd be in the bedroom at work. There would come a rap on the door, and it would be one of the children after something. 'Aunt Mandy'—that's what they called me—'ma's goin' to make some vanilla cookies and wants your vanilla'; or, 'ma's goin' to make some noodles and wants three eggs'; or perhaps it was gingersnaps and it would be a cup of molasses they would want. But no matter what I was doing, or who was here, I would have to get up and come out to get it for them.

"So it went on, year in and year out, from sugar to tacks and back

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again. Sometimes they would return the things, and many times they wouldn't. When we had the Sunday-school convention here I had two of the city preachers to care for. Of course I had things as nice as I could; ice cream and fried chicken and such like.

"Just as one of the preachers was saying grace, the second Cox boy piped up at the door: 'Say, Aunt Mandy, ma wants a piece o' that chicken and some o' that cream for little Washie; he's sick.' I was so embarrassed I didn't know where to look, but of course I gave it to him. My, but Abner was mad!

"In a few days he came home with a little blackboard and hung it right up there on the kitchen door. He wrote across the top, 'Coxes,' and on one side 'Borrowed,' and on the other 'Returned.' 'Now,' says he, 'whenever they get anything, you put it down on this side, and when they bring it back, put it down on that side. And let them know that hereafter whatever they borrow they will have to bring back.'

"'But Abner,' says I, 'it will hurt their feelings.' 'Feelings, fiddlesticks!' says he. 'If they had any they wouldn't borrow everything. And maybe they'll quit if they know they have to return things.'

"Well, the words weren't more than out of his mouth, when in comes the oldest Cox boy. 'Uncle Abner,' says he, 'can we get your tater fork? Ourns broke.' Abner gets it for him and then puts down under the borrowed column, 'Potato Fork, August 3.'

"It kept on that way for a month. Sugar, tea, spices, clothesline, skirt pattern, and spoons—they got them when they had company. The 'borrowed' column was full and over; on the 'returned' side there were just a few things that we had to have and had gone after, like the potato fork and clothesline.

"One morning, as I was kneading my bread at the table here, there was a rap at the door and Mrs. Cox came in and sat down to chat awhile. But she had a cup in her hand and I knew she was after something. While we were talking, and she was telling me about the program for Children's Day, and how her Mary was to speak a piece and Johnnie was in a dialogue, and how all of them were in something or other, the wind blew that kitchen door shut, and there was that blackboard staring at us.

"Well, when she sensed the meaning of it, she jumps up and fairly glares at me, and manages to stutter out: 'You—you on-neighborly things'! And with that she jerks the door open and was gone before I could say a thing, if there was anything to say.

"A few days later when I got home from the Aid meeting, I found

a whole box full of little packages on that bench there in the porch. There was pepper, mustard, starch, tea, rice, a spoonful of soda, a scrub brush, dustpan, part of a spool of thread—things I hadn't put down and had forgotten all about. When Abner came home at supper time I showed him the things and we had a good laugh.

"A couple of weeks went by and I had just made up my mind that they were done with us. Then one day, it being cool, I was sitting here by the cookstove doing my mending, when there was a knock at the door and there was Alfred Cox.

"'Say, Aunt Mandy, ma says if you don't mind she'd like to borrow that blackboard o' yourn. Them there Simms' are borrowin' from us all the time, and ma says she bets she'll break 'em.'

"I was some surprised, but I got it down and gave it to him. Then I said, 'Alfred, tell your mother I'm not loaning it to her, but making her a present of it. And I hope it will serve her as well as it has me, for I don't need it any more.'

"Did it break them of borrowing? Why, Miss Hetty, that kind of people will always be just that kind of people. But they didn't borrow from *us* any more." And she added, with a smile, "but I've always wanted to know what Mrs. Cox came after that morning."

Donovan's Day.*

BY ANNIE BATTERMAN LINDSAY.

UBTERRANEAN fires had wrought, with clamor and convulsion, to upheave Sugarloaf through the shattered crust; and in the fissures around its base Plutus had sifted in the golden-spangled quartz. All in order that Donovan might have his day.

Through the ages, the conical peak stood sentinel at the cañon's mouth, dominating the desert plain below, and waiting without impatience for Donovan.

On one side a corrugated ridge of basalt, like a cock's comb, traversed the inaccessible symmetry of the cone, so that Donovan should not fail to be lured to his preordained fate.

At last he came, six feet of man, singing as he trudged, grub-stake and goldpan on his back, a prospector's hammer in his hand, with which he knocked on Plutus' door.

"Come in! I've been expecting you a long time," said Plutus.

But a quartz proposition needs money, — a dollar in for every dollar out, they say. So Donovan was soon off again with his little sack of samples; and between his samples and his persuasive tongue, mellowed by just a reminiscence of brogue, succeeded in interesting the floating capital of Ernest Seagrave, Esquire, and some of his friends.

Then at the foot of Sugarloaf there was clamor and bustle; the silence of the ages was disturbed by the voices of men, clanking of loaded wagons, hammering and riveting and blasting; and finally by the puffing of steam and clatter of stamps.

When the work had progressed thus far, Mr. Seagrave, who had never seen a mine of any sort, thought he would go out and have a look at his own. In due time, this happy inspiration eventuated in a big touring car finding its way to Sugarloaf;

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no difficult feat, for there was a plain road now, with many coming and going on it.

From the touring car, alighted Mr. Seagrave and his guests, Miss Angel and her father. And this was the beginning of Donovan's day.

The tourists were conducted through the workings, underground and above. Miss Angel, her blonde hair and svelte figure eclipsed under a miner's hat and oilskin coat, a tin candlestick in her hand, was the most alert investigator of the three; so from the beginning of the tour, it was she who walked first in line after Superintendent Donovan, she to whom his explanatory conversation was most directly addressed.

When they came out of the depths, they found a deputation waiting them to invite the strangers to investigation of new developments further up the cañon. The presence of Eastern investors "in our midst" was an opportunity not to be overlooked by the owners of prospect holes yawning for capital. There was no road feasible for an auto beyond this point, but the transportation department had provided some nags. None of them, however, was furnished with a side-saddle, and Miss Angel passed up the proposition. She watched her father and Mr. Seagrave take their departure up the trail, and then looked about her to see if there were promise of more exciting amusement for the next two or three hours than the chapters of the half finished novel lying on the seat of the machine seemed likely to afford. Old Sugarloaf was there, ready and waiting. This was the day and the hour.

"What an inaccessible-looking little peak!" remarked Miss Angel. "Did any one ever climb it?"

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Donovan. "But not from this side."

"There must be a fine view from the top," hinted Miss Angel.

"Magnificent!" replied Donovan with enthusiasm.

"How long would it take?" inquired Miss Angel.

"About two hours to go up, and half as long to come down. Will you try it? It would be worth your while if you admire scenery."

"Of course I admire scenery!" returned the lady.

The trip thus far had been a distinct disappointment to Miss

Angel. She had come to the wild and woolly West and not a single thing had happened out of the ordinary. She had not met with a bear or a bandit, a cowboy or a cloudburst. At least here was a mountain and a man, — a very handsome one. She embraced the opportunity with some hopefulness.

* * * * * * *

Donovan led his guest to a narrow trestle that spanned the gulch where the waste rock was being dumped. A single board lay between the rails for the man who pushed the car to walk on, and Miss Angel was expected to cross on this, above the dizzy gulf. For a moment she hesitated.

"Can't you do it?" inquired Donovan. "It will save a mile of hard walking."

"Yes, I can," said she, and advanced upon the board.

One-eyed Billy, who was holding his car waiting for them to pass, looked after her appreciatively with his single orb.

"This is your day, Misther Donovan," he said to his boss as he went by. No offense was meant; his employer took none.

"It's the day of me life," he answered.

"Beg pardon?" inquired Miss Angel, turning her head.

"I was telling this fellow that it would be worth his life if he dumped any rock over this trestle before we were off it," said Donovan.

They crossed without difficulty, Bertha walking quickly with eyes straight ahead, as Donovan bade her.

They then ascended the slope of the opposite hill until they came to the head of the ravine; here they crossed back again on a hog's-back ridge, which was almost as ticklish work as the trestle, and found themselves well up on the peak of Sugarloaf. They had taken their time, and Bertha had beguiled the way by "drawing out" her companion. Donovan knew what he was there for and allowed himself to be drawn out effectively; what his conversation lacked in solid fact, it made up for in piquancy and picturesqueness; he told his stories well and did credit to his upbringing. And he *was* so handsome!

"How I could love you," thought Bertha, "if you were only

one of my kind! What a pity, what a pity, that this should be going to waste in a desert!"

Nevertheless, when one of his narratives seemed to be tending toward levititious mention of his partner, whom he referred to as "Percy Vere de Vere with the bicycle lamp" (Mr. Seagrave wore a monocle), she sounded a note of warning.

"Be a little careful, Mr. Donovan, if you please," she said.

Donovan paused abruptly.

"Is he anything to you?" he asked, bluntly.

"I am engaged to him," she answered as bluntly.

"He is a good fellow," said Donovan, loyally. "We all laugh at each other out here, you know."

Miss Angel sighed unconsciously. She had no fault to find with Mr. Seagrave. He was a nice man of his sort; but the vintage seemed a little thin at the moment.

Donovan caught the sigh.

"You are tired?" he asked.

Bertha protested that she was not, but he insisted that she sit down and rest.

"The worst is yet to come," he assured her.

Miss Angel culled one of the sunflowers with which the whole mountainside was gilded, and plucked the leaves, daisy-wise, repeating the foolish patter.

"He loves me not," she concluded, and cast the ravished stem away.

"Then he is a lost fool," said Donovan. "But don't you know," he added, "it would require a good deal of a man to love you."

The young lady looked startled. To be sure, she had been treating the blue-shirted miner perfectly as one of her own kind, but she feared that she had gone a little too far, in that he seemed entirely unaware of any condescension on her part in doing so. Still, she encouraged him to proceed by saying doubtfully, "Is that complimentary or otherwise?"

"Any man, not blind," continued Donovan, regarding her thoughtfully, "could love you with his eyes. And a fine gentleman like my pardner could love you with his sense of fitness, and be sure you would never discredit it. And a clever

man could love you with his mind, — if he were clever enough not to be jealous of yours. But none of them could love — *you!*"

Bertha looked at him with something resembling fright in her eyes. To the primitive woman in her, smothered deep under the veneer of civilization, this son of the solitudes dared to appeal boldly, sure of his ground. How did he know? How did he *know!* She arose, breathing rather quickly.

"We will never reach the top, if we don't go on," she suggested.

As Donovan had said, the worst was yet to come; but with his aid, she surmounted it without too much difficulty, and they stood upon the summit.

The cone afforded, as she had been promised, a magnificent outlook. Although a mere baby among peaks, in comparison to the giants ranged behind it, its shape, its isolation, and its location at the mouth of the cañon and on the rim of the desert, combined to give it a commanding position.

On one side, they looked up the gorge to an elemental chaos of snowy heights; turning to the other, the vision spanned vast spaces and reached yet other ranges, blue upon the horizon.

Directly at their feet, seeming near enough to drop a stone down the smoke-stack of the mill, was the spot from whence they had climbed.

"It looks so close!" said Bertha. "And to think of all the distance we have to go to get back! Did no one ever go down this side?"

"Not that I know of," Donovan replied.

The face of the slope was clearly impracticable, not only from its steepness, but because it was entirely covered by sharp-edged shards and flakes of rock from the size of an arrow-head to that of a dinner-plate. But Bertha thought she descried a way.

"It almost seems as if we could go down there, among those rocks," she suggested. Her eyes were on the comb which has been mentioned as ridging one side of the peak.

Donovan considered it.

"We might if we had the nerve," he said. "But it's only fair to warn you that it would be a good deal more difficult than it looks from here."

"Let's try it," insisted Bertha. "If it's not feasible, we can come back and go around."

"It may not be feasible to come back," predicted Donovan.

"You're afraid!" she taunted.

"Afraid that I would get some place with you where I couldn't get back!" exclaimed Donovan.

And that should have stopped her, you say, if she had been a nice girl. But, you see, it was only for one day; and she had been so bored for three weeks.

* * * * * * *

They picked their way down to the beginning of the ledge, and clambered out upon it. It was pretty easy going at first. Bertha was a natural born mountaineer, clear-headed, sure-footed, able to choose quickly and take advantage of every foothold and handhold; she had on a sensible short skirt and fairly stout boots; though she soon saw ruefully that this was to be their finish.

And Donovan's hand was always ready, sure as the rock itself. Having acquitted his conscience by warning her against the adventure, he treated it now as a perfectly commonplace one. He helped her down, step by step, with no more apparent sense of anything unusual in the situation than if he were assisting her to alight from a trolley car.

So they went along finely until they had accomplished about a third of the descent. The enterprise had been so easy that it seemed to render ridiculous the timorousness with which it had been approached.

But now a step intervened beyond the reach of even Donovan's searching foot. He swung down by his hands and felt about for a toehold; having discovered one at last, he swung the other foot out into space and found a support for it on a small pinnacle. He let go above and braced himself, one leg straightened horizontally against the face of the rock. Below him a few inches was a little shelf, narrow but sufficient.

"Come!" he said, holding up his arms. "Put your foot on my leg, there, and your hands on my shoulders and I

will swing you down on a good place that I see below here."

His tone was perfectly matter-of-fact, but Bertha drew back, dismayed, both at the idea of the contact and at the seeming impossibility of his mantaining his precarious balance under her added weight.

"Oh, you can't!" she said, voicing one-half her reason. "I am not a fairy, Mr. Donovan, and you have no foothold."

"A perfectly good one," he responded. "You're not a quitter, are you?"

Bertha still hesitated. This was the Rubicon. From where she stood, she could still go back, but once over that verge, there would be no going back. And who knew what lay beyond? Donovan knew perfectly, but was not telling.

"It may get worse and worse," she murmured.

"Well, at the worst," said Donovan, cheerfully, "there are plenty of men and ropes down below there. We have only to holler."

It began to look like a real adventure. With a delicious thrill of excitement, the so-bored Miss Angel crouched down, put one foot on Donovan's thigh, where he had told her, and her hands on his shoulders.

"Don't be afraid," said Donovan, reassuringly, and placing his hands firmly on her waist, he swung her easily down to the place he had selected, and followed after her. She was pale and trembling all over, not only because she had been a little frightened, but because a descent is more trying than an ascent, and her unaccustomed muscles were beginning to assert their fatigue. But Donovan ignored these first symptoms of a breakdown.

"See how easy," he remarked. "You won't be afraid to trust yourself to me next time." And he began looking about him for another step. Then she made a discovery.

"It is just more of the same," she cried, looking at him reproachfully.

"It does look like it, doesn't it?" said Donovan. "But we have to go on now; we can't go back." And they went on in the same way. Donovan would find a foothold, brace himself, she would place her foot on his knee or his thigh, her hands on his

shoulders, or around his neck, if the case were very bad, and he would take her in his arms, and put her down on some little vantage point, and find another for her hand to cling to until he had swung himself down again. And then the performance would be repeated. When she had once tested the strength of his muscles and the surety of his clasp, she no longer doubted his ability to get her safely down. When he said, "Ready now!" or "Come!" his steady eye held her nerve steady for that time. After that first occasion, she had no feeling of prudery in giving herself to him, for he handled her as if she were a package, a precious one most certainly, but one without any human appeal. She appreciated the perfection of his attitude, and yet she subconsciously resented it. It seemed almost inhuman; she felt as if a little petting would have helped her along wonderfully over that rocky road.

As for Donovan, he kept saying his lesson to himself. Each time he took her in his arms, each time her breath fanned his neck, her hair got into his eyes, or her cheek grazed his, he said to his soul, "She trusts you Donovan! She is helpless! She could not resent it if you held her tight while you covered her face with hot kisses. But if you do it, I'll beat your brains out against the door-jamb when I get you alone."

Nevertheless, there was growing in him momentarily a fierce sense of possession which was likely to set at naught in the end all prior claims and conventions.

And so they came down another third of the way. Then a roomy shelf, which was almost a platform, seemed to offer opportunity for a brief intermission of the strain upon nerve and muscle. But below it was a fearful drop. Bertha looked over at it and her pluck deserted her on the instant. It occurred to her with sudden realization that Donovan must be as tired as she. Even his sinews of steel could not endure such effort indefinitely. This was the place where they were going to succumb at last, and both would be precipitated to destruction together. And what would she look like at the bottom? To be a corpse was bad enough, but to be a scrappy one was beyond endurance. She cast herself down and lay prone with her face pressed into the rock. She would have amalgamated herself

with it if she could. She commenced to cry; she had been wanting to do it for a good while. Donovan saw that, exactly as he had foreboded, panic had seized her just as soon as he allowed her a moment's respite from exertion. He looked at her helplessly.

"It's no use, no use," she sobbed. "Save yourself and leave me here to die! I deserve it!"

"Of course you do and of course I will," said Donovan. "But it's funny how I seem to hanker after dying myself since you told me that about Percy — I beg your pardon! — Seagrave." He sighed.

Bertha made no reply. Perchance, she was waiting to see if here was the man who knew how to love her. But Donovan was still saying his lesson to himself; so instead of comforting her after the manner of his longing, he sat down before her and swung his feet over the edge.

"Oh, *don't!*" she cried, shuddering and pressing her face again to the rock from which she had lifted it almost imperceptibly to peep at what he was doing. He laughed and commenced telling her a funny story. At length, he had her smiling; she sat up and took off her hat and began to reassure herself as to hairpins. Then Donovan suddenly flattened himself out on the rock, dug his toes into a crevice, gritted his teeth, and before she guessed what he was going to do, swept her from her seat and swung her over the edge. She screamed and clung to him, as he leaned over, his arms stretched to the utmost, supporting her full weight.

"Let go!" he said. "There is a good place not six inches from your toes. It means your life, dear! My foot is slipping!"

She let go then and found herself still alive, much to her surprise, and not in fractional parts.

"Here is your hat," Donovan said, placidly, handing it to her, and then swung himself down beside her and faced her anger. She was white and quivering.

"Oh, you brute!" she breathed. "*You brute!*"

"But you're down!" retorted Donovan, exultantly.

"You did not have to treat me that way!" she exclaimed, examining her reddened wrists. Donovan took them both in one

hand and chafed them tenderly with the other. He refrained from kissing them, but he looked into her eyes and said irrelevantly:

"Is that wedding coming off soon?"

"It — the day is not set yet," Bertha admitted, averting her glance.

"Then," said Donovan, "I have a presentiment that it is not going to be." The descent was practically accomplished now. They skirted the base of the ledge, because it was easier to clamber along it than to make their way over the flinty talus at its foot. Suddenly, just beneath them, some invisible person shouted, "All set!"

"Oh, my God!" said Donovan. He caught the girl and threw her down upon the ground at the bottom of the rock wall, and bent his body above her.

"Lie still! Lie still, darling!" he implored her, as she struggled in his grasp, believing him gone suddenly mad. He was near madness, it is true, for when he heard that shout, he had remembered for the first time that on that very morning he had set a shift of men at work to excavate a place for an extension of the mill. That warning cry meant that a battery of blasts was about to be discharged almost beneath their feet. And while Bertha fought to free herself, they commenced to go off. As a shower of debris from the first one pattered about them, the second went off; then four more.

When Bertha recovered consciousness, she felt a heavy weight on her chest; she discovered that it was Donovan's body, lying inert across hers. She pushed at him, feebly at first, then savagely, fighting for a chance to breathe. When she succeeded in lifting him, he rolled over on his back and lay still, his head down hill. She sat up and looked at him and slowly began to comprehend what had happened. Then she saw a stream of crimson fluid stealing over the rock a little distance before it sank away out of sight. After watching it stupidly for a while, she felt a dawning curiosity as to whence it came, and followed it with her eye to its source. Then she saw that it was welling out of a jagged hole just below the man's ear. The discovery galvanized her into life.

She sprang to him, searching frantically for something to stanch the dreadful flow. Her handkerchief seemed a paltry dam as she pressed it between the jagged lips of the wound and essayed to hold them together over it.

"Donovan! Donovan!" she cried. (She had never heard his baptismal name.) "Don't die! I love you! I love you! Oh, *can't* you hear? I love you!"

She rained kisses upon his pallid face.

His lids fluttered. They lifted. Through his filming eyes, his soul spoke to hers across the abyss.

"I was the man who knew how to love you. Remember me!" his look said.

"If he had only kissed me, just once!" she grieved, her head lying on his lifeless breast, her heart confounded with a bitter sense of eternal, never-to-be-compensated loss.

But Donovan had had his day.

Hilligoss*

BY LOUIS ST. JOHN

HEN the Citizens' party nominated Hilligoss for mayor of Manitou many townspeople declared it was a shame, a gross violation of the eternal fitness of things. Others said he was all right even if he was a public hackman who wore green-and-yellow livery as an advertising dodge to attract a little more than his share of the tourist patronage. Others laughed.

Hilligoss himself laughed. Beyond doubt, his laugh was the loudest of any. He regarded his nomination as a joke; but he liked a good joke, and he was determined to see this one through.

He had not dreamed of being nominated. Neither had his friends even considered it. He had a candidate of his own—Jim Bowen, an honest contractor, whose chief claim to fame was the fact that he had been deported from Cripple Creek in the strenuous Western Federation days. Hilligoss worked hard for his man in the convention and stood a good chance of landing him when Bowen had a paralytic stroke.

Then the trouble began. Who would make the right candidate for mayor? The delegates quarreled and the convention split into factions. The Citizens' party was composed largely of "outs," reformers, small taxpayers and rooming-house keepers. That very spring it had come into being with the avowed purpose of saving Manitou. Its platform was: "Something is Wrong." It had two slogans: "Manitou for the Middle-class Tourist," and "Down with Ed Mason."

With bedlam turned loose in the convention, someone jumped up, and in shrieking tones proposed John Hilligoss as the Citizens' candidate for mayor. The delegates were struck dumb. Then they laughed. Then a man shouted: "I second the nomination! Hilligoss is the man. He's a hackman and every summer meets ten times as many tourists as any of the rest of us. He knows what the tourists want and how to get it for them. He's a square man, a big

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man, even if he ain't fancy, and if anybody can drive Ed Mason out of Manitou politics that fellow is Hilligoss!" This swept the convention off its feet. Before anybody could draw a second breath Hilligoss was made the nominee.

Choking with laughter, he was bundled up front to make a speech. "Friends," he said, "if it's a joke, the joke's on you. For I'm going to run. Then if I'm elected the joke will be on Ed Mason. Ed Mason has been the man behind every mayor and other office-holder Manitou has had in the last twenty years, and he's made more money grafting than in running his big hotel. He spends the money of you taxpayers on public improvements in the vicinity of his hotel and lets the rest of the town go to thunder. He advertises Manitou all over the country as a resort fit only for the rich, thus trying to attract the patronage of bloated bondholders to the Mason House. This kind of dodge is scaring the middle-class tourist away from Manitou, and without the patronage of the middle-class tourist, you and I and all our friends, will starve.

"Now, friends, I'm going to run for three reasons: I want to rid Manitou politics of the pestiferous Ed Mason; I want to restore Manitou to the middle-class tourists—and to ourselves; and I want to be pointed out on the streets this summer as the mayor-hackman. Think of the boost to my business when tourists know they can be driven around and shown the sights by the mayor of Manitou! Thank you, one and all."

Ed Mason's party, which was composed of the "ins," Democrats and Republicans alike, and the uppers generally, met in convention a week later. It was a perfunctory affair, and Mason's slate went through as usual. The party was nominally Republican; and its creed, the articles of which had been written by the hotel owner, could be summarized in the terse though somewhat uninspiring statement: Manitou Exclusively for the Exclusives. So there would be a real issue in the campaign.

The mayor whose term was expiring was Ed Mason's man, of course. He was a patched-up consumptive who lived in Manitou for his health. He declined a renomination on the ground of worry in office, and Mason chose the wealthy though eccentric Colonel Shelby, late of Kentucky, as the Exclusives' standard bearer.

Colonel Shelby was by no means unknown to local fame. He lived on Aegis mountain in the finest and highest house in town; he had presented the municipality a park and a drinking-fountain; and he hated politics. He was in Louisville at the time of his nomination, and it was said that Mason secured his grudging consent to

run only after dispatching many urgent appeals by telegraph. It was affirmed also—by Mason's enemies—that the colonel had been assured that the holding of office would not cause him any inconvenience or take any of his time, as he was expected to be mayor in name only. Although he was gusty and opinionated, he was likable enough personally; but the circumstances of his nomination damned his candidacy.

Mason had no sleepless nights, however. He regarded Hilligoss as a joke. "A mayor in livery?" he queried, puffing his big black perfecto; and then he roared.

Hilligoss felt like a quitter for the first time when he learned that his good friend and patron, Colonel Shelby, was to be his opponent. The idea of running against the man he had driven up and down Aegis mountain every day for a dozen years, filled him with dismay. The colonel had done him many favors; in the off season, when tourists were scarce, he could always be depended upon to take a ride and pay well for it. What would he say when he returned home and found out that his friend Hilligoss was to be his rival in the race?

"It's mighty tough," said the driver to his wife. "Colonel Shelby and I have had many a pleasant argumentation going up and down old Aegis mountain; it's too bad he got caught in Ed Mason's snare. But politics is politics; and Manitou must be saved; and people must point me out this summer as the mayor-hackman."

Hilligoss began his campaign immediately after his nomination. He had a great deal of incredulity and downright prejudice to overcome, as the citizens could not reconcile themselves to the thought of their mayor being a mere driver, even if that driver did own his carriage, his horses, his home, and a respectable little bank account. The unfailing good-humor of Hilligoss, his ingenuousness, his readiness to oblige had won him many friends; besides, he was a man of considerable native ability and great public spirit; but the mayor of a fashionable resort like Manitou is supposed to have some conception of the dignity of his office. "He wouldn't make a bad constable," said Ed Mason, who was tickled to death. "But a mayor in livery—!"

"Hadn't you better take it off?" asked Mrs. Hilligoss of her husband.

"I should say not," he answered stoutly. "Don't I need advertising more than ever now? The early tourists have begun to arrive, and we need the money, Sarah. Besides, if I take off my livery now people will say I'm ashamed of my calling, which I ain't."

Hilligoss proved to be a unique campaigner. His own breezy personality was of course his best asset; but he utilized every accessory means to success with gusto. He made the other Manitou-savers on the Citizens' ticket work for him—and incidentally for themselves; he enlisted the enthusiastic support of the hackmen, with whom he was very popular despite the fact that he was in a class by himself when it came to getting the tourist business; he had his wife go calling every afternoon to talk up his candidacy to the women; and he slyly instructed the schoolchildren, who idolized him on account of the countless free rides he had given them, to buttonhole their papas in his behalf.

This was not all. He dived into his pocket and paid out real money to have the town decorated with gorgeous red-and-yellow posters which were made still more hideous with impossible pictures of himself under which were the defiant words: "Down with Ed Mason! I am for Manitou and the Middle-class Tourist!" Then, to crown all, he had Red mountain strung with the name "Hilligoss" in huge letters of white canvas, which could be seen almost as far away as Colorado Springs.

This was sensationalism, but it was also enterprise; and if Hilligoss had employed less spectacular methods Manitou would have been surprised and disappointed. Indeed, if he had confiscated Pike's Peak itself for advertising purposes or painted his smiling likeness on the rocks that formed the gateway to the Garden of the Gods, people would have laughed and said: "What won't Hilligoss do next?"

His campaign was progressing favorably. The Citizens' party, notwithstanding the dubious civic spirit of some of its recruits, had a very vital issue; and Hilligoss talked it even in his sleep. The majority of Manitou voters rented rooms in the summer, and as they had to depend on the middle-class tourist business for a living they were beginning to see that Ed Mason's policy of transforming the town into a western inland Newport would be disastrous to them. The trend of things worried Mason; he had not dreamed that Hilligoss would make such a canvas. So he got busy.

He inspired the Manitou *Argus* editor, whom he owned, to fiercer attacks on Hilligoss. He put out several hundred poster caricatures of a hackman inscribed with the hair-raising question: "Do You Want a Mayor in Livery?" Through chosen mouthpieces he explained his policy, contending that he was working for a greater Manitou and not a more exclusive one. He had his councilmen, all of whom were up for re-election, make speeches. He opened the

beautiful parlors of his hotel for informal discussions. He promised the people that he would make Manitou the most famous of high-class summer resorts. He reminded them of the faith he had shown in the town by building the handsome Mason House. He appealed to their pride. Hilligoss appealed to their pocket-books.

One day when no one expected it, Colonel Shelby, Ed Mason's candidate for mayor, returned home from Louisville. A torrential spring rain was falling, and the enterprising Hilligoss—in livery—was the only hackman at the station to meet any chance tourist. Colonel Shelby, picturesque in his big cape overcoat and broad-brimmed black hat, hurried into the carriage with sundry swear words about the weather, warned Hilligoss to see carefully to the waterproof flaps, and then, being comfortably seated, favored the driver with a prodigious handshake.

"By gum, Hilligoss, but you're the only driver in Manitou who's always on the job. We ought to show our appreciation of you in some public and substantial way. Beastly rain—but how green the mountains are already looking! After all, Manitou is the only place. Any tourists coming in yet?"

"Not many, sir."

"Don't worry; they'll come later. We're bound to have a banner summer. People can't stay away from Manitou; they—" He broke off abruptly, his gaze fastening itself to a billboard in front of them. "Why, what's that?"

"One of your posters, sir."

"One of my —! Oh, I forgot. I *am* running for mayor, eh?" And he laughed heartily. "I'd forgotten all about it, Hilligoss. How's your wife?"

"Very well, thank you, sir."

"Good." He lighted a cigar and gave one to Hilligoss. "I tell you there's nothing like health; it makes a man feel— By gum, Hilligoss, what's *that?*"

They were driving past another billboard. Hilligoss whipped up the horses. "What's what?" he asked innocently.

"That poster. Hold on—what does it say? 'Do You Want a Mayor in Livery?' Livery! D—n 'em! Are they trying to make a flunkey of me?"

"Excuse me, sir, but that's meant to make fun of your opponent."

"My opponent? So I have an opponent, then. Why, of course. I didn't think of that. Well, well! Who is the poor fool, Hilligoss?"

Hilligoss swallowed hard: the dreaded moment had come. "I hate to say it, Colonel Shelby, but I'm him."

"—You're him?"

"Well, then, he's me."

The colonel's rugged face wore a look of blank amazement. "You run for mayor of Manitou—you, Hilligoss? Who put you up? The hackmen's union? *You* run against *me?* Look here, sir," roared the colonel, "that's nothing but treason, sir—nothing but treason."

"I ain't running against you," explained Hilligoss soothingly, "I'm running against Ed Mason."

"Ed Mason! So I'm nothing but a dummy, eh? If I'm elected Ed Mason will be mayor! Is that what you mean?"

"Ed Mason has been mayor of Manitou for the last twenty years, sir."

"But I'm not Ed Mason!"

"Thank God for that, sir. I just wanted to say—"

But the colonel interrupted him in thunderous tones. "Not another word, sir, not another word!"

They passed by Ed Mason's hotel, the broad piazzas of which were deserted in the storm, and began the ascent of Aegis mountain. Colonel Shelby maintained a stony silence until they reached his house. Hilligoss carried his suitcase up the porch steps.

"Shall I call for you tomorrow morning as usual, sir?" he asked.

"Nobody told you not to," snapped the colonel, slamming the door.

The next morning Hilligoss found him in better humor. There was even the suspicion of a twinkle in his eyes.

"Now, Hilligoss," he said, as they started down the mountain, "tell me all about it."

Hilligoss cleared his throat. "When I accepted the nomination I didn't know you was going to run, sir—"

"I didn't mean that," interrupted the other impatiently. "You have a perfect right to run. As for me, I hate politics. I'm sorry I'm to be mixed up in this infernal mess here. It's all Mason's fault. Now go ahead and tell me why you're running for office."

"Well, Colonel, the conditions demand it," answered Hilligoss slowly and carefully. "Ed Mason has run this town for twenty years; you know that—"

"I don't know anything of the sort," the colonel broke in hotly. "You take too infernally much for granted, Hilligoss. What do I know about Manitou politics? I tell you I despise politics.

Besides, I'm away three-fourths of the time. Now go ahead and enlighten me."

Hilligoss tried again—this time even more carefully. "Well, Colonel, Ed Mason never allows any public improvements except near his hotel; he won't even let his councilmen—I say *his,* for he owns 'em all—hire a man to water the grass in the park you gave the town, all because the park's three or four blocks from his property."

"Humph!" grunted the donor.

"But that ain't all," Hilligoss continued, warming up. "Ed Mason is advertising Manitou in a way to scare off all the middle-class tourists. He's so monstrous selfish he don't care if the whole town goes to smash just so he can rope in a few hundred dead swells to stop at his hotel. Now, Colonel, this ain't right. If Ed Mason had his way he'd put nine-tenths of us out of business. Our rooms would be vacant and our carriages empty—he'd have a monopoly with his auto busses. Besides, sir, is it Christianity? Do you think God Almighty planted Pike's Peak here, and the Garden of the Gods, simply for the weary eyes of the rich to look at 'em and then turn up their noses and talk Switzerland? Manitou for the middle-class tourist! That's my slogan."

Colonel Shelby was silent during the rest of the drive down the mountain. When they drew near Ed Mason's hotel he said with a smile:

"Now, Hilligoss, tell me why I ought to be defeated for mayor."

Hilligoss smiled too—his ingenuous, spontaneous smile that was so hard to resist. "Well, sir, I hate to say it, but there ain't one reason why you ought to be elected. Ed Mason could never own *you,* but he'd own the office—don't you see? You hate politics; you're away a good part of the time; and when at home you wouldn't have the patience to be nothing but the mayor of a little town like Manitou. You'd better leave that to a fellow in livery like me."

"Very convincing, Hilligoss. Drop me off here at the Mason House." And the colonel laughed softly as he alighted and walked up the white stone pavement down which Ed Mason was hurrying with a welcoming smile.

Election day drew near and the close of the campaign was marked by feverish activity on both sides. As a result of burning the midnight oil over a manual of speech-making and debate, Hilligoss had taken the stump and made good. His speeches were like the man—they carried conviction; and he made the concession of not appearing in livery. He had called on everybody in town, political foes as

well as friends, and promised the aged and infirm to take them to the polls in his carriage. Altogether the outlook for the Citizens' ticket was very encouraging.

Ed Mason was wild—so his enemies said. He realized that his work of twenty years was about to be undone by a herd of mavericks led by a whip-wielder in livery. His lieutenants were fighting hard to stem the tide; but so far he had not prevailed on Colonel Shelby to make a speech. The colonel was not afflicted with stage fright. He was simply afraid he might lose what few votes he might otherwise get, he explained to Mason with a sly wink which Mason did not see.

"Nonsense," the boss answered; "you're the most popular man here. Look at that park you gave the town."

The colonel smiled, then grew serious. "Mason," he said, "why are you running me anyhow?"

"To beat that flunkey Hilligoss and his down-at-heel crowd. We can make Manitou a high-toned resort if we go about it right."

Colonel Shelby thought a moment. "If I consent to speak will you let me make the kind of speech I want, short or long, with or without notes, and say what I please?"

"Certainly, Colonel; we'll leave that entirely to you."

"All right; it's agreed."

The Exclusives' candidate was advertised to speak the night before election. Ed Mason rented all the halls in town so there could be no counter-attraction, and had a brass band and a colored quartette from Colorado Springs. The hall was packed when the meeting opened. Some of the leading citizens sat on the platform to lend dignity to the occasion; but Ed Mason was discreetly absent.

The chairman had just concluded his preliminary talk and was about to introduce Colonel Shelby when Hilligoss strolled down the aisle hunting a seat. The crowd broke into wild applause. The chairman could not proceed, and Colonel Shelby rose, motioned him to his seat and began his speech without formality.

"Friends!" he thundered; and the noise subsided. "Thank you," he continued pleasantly. "Now I dislike politics and I like political speeches even less; so this one will be pretty short, not more than half a minute in length. First of all I want to say that no man owns me, notwithstanding all reports to the contrary. If you insist on electing me mayor I'll do the best I can for you—but I'm afraid my best wouldn't be very much. I'm away from town a good deal and I'd soon grow tired of holding office. Now, friends, I've looked into the local political situation quite a bit lately and I've

come to the conclusion that what Manitou needs is a mayor of the people, by the people and for the people, a mayor who wouldn't take orders from the President of the United States, a mayor who would rather work than eat. If you think I'd make that kind of mayor, why, go ahead and vote for me. As for me, I won't take any chances. Tomorrow morning I shall go and cast my humble ballot for John Hilligoss."

Without this speech, it would have been a walkover; with it, it was a landslide, a rout.

The day after election as Mayor-elect Hilligoss drove Colonel Shelby up Aegis mountain he said enviously: "I only wish I could make a speech like you, Colonel."

The Romantic Journalist*

BY RUSSELL PETTIS ASKUE

IN search of the managing editor's office I followed the elevator man's directions and found the janitor washing windows in a storeroom. Between puffs of his pipe the janitor explained that he wasn't my man. Then I followed his instructions and found myself looking into the deep brown eyes of a little woman seated at a big typewriter. I excused myself, then apologized; and by that time was so much confused that I walked right into the editor's office.

I stood beside his desk while he moved a pile of papers out of the way of his ash-tray, and lifted a high stack of letters from his right side to his left—one at a time.

I have a queer habit of dreaming when I'm left with nothing to do for a minute or two. I suppose that's why it seemed as though fluffy hair, golden chestnut, was blowing against my face, and that deep brown eyes were still gazing at me through the fluffs. I didn't dream any more 'cause the editor woke me up.

"Well, what can I do for you?" he asked; and his voice was deep and drawling, and made me feel at home.

I laid my cap on a chair and seated myself in his ash-tray. Then I explained that I had long desired to travel in Germany; and that now at last my wealthy great-aunt had died. And would his paper buy the stories I would write during the journey—'cause my aunt had forgotten me in her will?

Now it happened that the editor was in a good humor, and so he did not laugh at me.

"That's fine," he said; "bully! Send us all you want to. But it may be well for you to know something about the policy of this newspaper. In the first place all manuscripts received in this office are divided into two classes—those we keep and those we don't. If you plan to send us 'We weighed anchor at 3:13 and were called to

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dinner promptly at 5:01' stuff, you'd better forget it right away; we don't publish time-tables. Besides, the libraries are full of just such classic literature on travel. We don't care a snap what particular hour you may choose for retiring, nor are we interested in knowing how many souls there may have been in the little Dutch burg of Four-Corners in the year *umpty-steen.* Now you know what we don't want!

"But listen!"—And the editor's big fist on its way to his palm came so near my timid nose that I nearly slid off the desk—"Listen! If you can send us good stuff built around something that's really alive we'll use it. Anybody can see ships and the sea; see if you can't see something more.

"For instance; if your ship picks up a raft in mid-ocean with a little woolly dog sitting on it all alone, get a look at the locket hanging by its gold chain around his neck. After you've seen the picture and the lock of hair inside search in the safe deposit vault on the raft till you find the diamond ring; also the last message of farewell written in iambic pentameter with a fountain pen on a silk handkerchief. Then take a dozen photographs or so of the survivor, with the raft and other accessories, and send us a story of 'The Lost Lovers of the Atlantic.' We can use stuff like that."

From my seat in the editor's ash-tray I thanked him from the bottom of my heart, then bade him good-day. But before I reached the door he called me back. "You'd better take your hat," said he; "it's too small for me. And if you hear any legends concerning the old castles on the Rhine, write 'em up. Make 'em mysterious and romantic.

"Suppose while rowing on the river a pebble cut with the letters C. R. rolls from an ancient wall and falls at your feet. Investigate and see if a German princess wasn't once held prisoner there. And explain how the stone held its place in the wall for two hundred years after she had dropped it to the waiting lover below who never found it."

I was fairly teeming with excitement as I took my departure, and wished my boat might sail the next day instead of keeping me waiting five weeks.

As I passed her door again I caught a glimpse of the little woman whose face had so stirred my bachelor heart. The elevator man told me she was the society editor. Then I remembered how the janitor had directed me to her office when I had sought the manager. So I decided not to believe either one, but to lov—to like her for her own sake.

That's all there is to the first part of the story, except to say that I boarded the wrong car for home; and then—which is much more important—finally got the right one.

* * * * * * *

Did you ever dream over something you planned to do? Dream over it so much that in imagination you really did it, over and over, even to the smallest details? That's just what I did long before I started on my voyage of romance and journalism.

But I started at last. It was late afternoon when the wharf began to move away from us in obedience to the shrill whistling of the steamer. Instinctively I felt for my watch. Then I remembered the editor's antipathy to time, and wished I had left the watch at home. But a cabin-boy happened to be near at hand, so I gave it to him.

At dinner, a little later, I had my first taste of steamer fare—and shortly afterward my first taste of sea-sickness. They tasted much alike. Only the one lasted much longer than the other. In fact, it was nearly two days before I could enjoy the deck. And then we sighted the raft.

The first I saw of it was when they were lifting something aboard —a little wet shivering dog with long woolly hair. He seemed glad to see human beings again, and romped about among the passengers as though unconscious of weariness and wetness or fine clothes that shouldn't be spattered.

As soon as he saw me he removed his paws from the lace collar of a little schoolma'm who had stooped to pat him, and bounded into my arms. I appeared to be his long-lost brother; and while he was giving me effusive greeting I explored the thick hair of his neck. Sure enough—there was the locket. In spite of his enthusiastic wrigglings I managed to unfasten it, and hide it, chain and all, in my hand. Then I hurried away to my stateroom, and the dog came hurrying after.

I was just about to open the locket in the privacy of my room when the door opened. My roommate came in, and privacy went out; so I dropped the locket into my pocket. Then I remembered that I hadn't examined the raft and hastened on deck with my camera.

The crowd of passengers at the rail had dispersed, and I could see nothing of the raft till a sailor pointed it out to me—a dark speck far behind us.

"Didn't they bring it aboard?" I asked him.

"No sir,—of course not."

"But why not?"

"Well, I guess the old man was so sore about layin' to to rescue a pup he didn't want to take no time to save a pile o' lumber."

The sailor was beginning to get a little sarcastic so I didn't ask him anything more. Since the raft was gone I decided to take a picture of the deck to illustrate my story. And then I discovered that I had brought only plates for use in my film camera. In that moment of disappointment I almost wished I had been born with common-sense instead of dreams.

I felt pretty much discouraged as I returned to my room. I hadn't found the diamond ring nor the last message, and couldn't have proved my story with photographs even if I had.

When I stumbled into my room I found the woolly dog asleep, and my roommate—who was sailing to Paris to make an artist of himself—was sketching him. He explained—the artist did—that he (the dog) refused to pose quietly and contentedly until he fed him some condensed milk—a gallon of it, I believe he said.

When I heard this my heart beat high with hope and inspiration; also with sympathy for the little dog. There was material for a story, after all; and I could use the sketches as illustrations. In a burst of generosity I offered the artist a couple of cigars for two and he promised to make as many more as I desired. The success of my story was assured—I could almost see the flaming headlines:

HEROIC CANINE CONSUMES CANNED LACTEAL

MIRACULOUS APPETITE

FOLLOWS LONG EXPOSURE ON RAFT

Gold locket on dog's neck tells of tragedy at sea.

I was suddenly consumed with curiosity concerning the contents of the locket; and while the artist was busy with his pencil and the pup I opened it.

I can never hope to put into words the feelings that mastered me when the cover snapped back and revealed the secrets it had guarded.

Before me lay a lock of hair, and the photograph of a man. The editor had prepared me for those very things, yet I could hardly believe my eyes. For I was sure that only one woman in all the world could have been glorified with hair like that. It was fluffy and chestnut, and yet it was golden too. And the photograph—it was a "ping-pong" print of me!

At first I was gloriously happy—and then I remembered. The owner of the locket was lying in the dark dread depths of the sea. I tried to think it couldn't be so; that perhaps she had been rescued from the raft on which her pet was left to perish. Yet somehow I couldn't believe it—the testimony of the locket was too strong. Would she have entrusted such cherished treasure to a dumb brute unless she herself had given up all hope?

The days that followed were the most desolate I have ever known. I was tempted many times to drop quietly over the rail. And I am sure I should have done so had it not been for one thing—my photograph in her locket. The locket that testified to her death proclaimed also her love. And so I lived, to dream of her; and sometimes, in spite of reason, to hope.

I had never seen her except on the day of my visit to the editor. Had she seen me at any other time? Where had she obtained my picture? And most puzzling of all was the wonder of her loving me.

I had almost no money. Faith in my ability to obtain checks from the editor back home had sent me forth supplied with very little besides my passage. A big story had come to me all of its own accord, yet I scorned the money I might have earned by writing it. What would she have thought of me if, for dollars, I had published her love?

We landed at Rotterdam and I took a steamer up the Rhine. I didn't have cash enough to go very far and so they put us off the boat —the woolly dog and me—at the German town of Bonn.

The scenery above the town was wonderful; and in order to view it from the river I obtained a rowboat from an old man who didn't know I was penniless. I wanted to enjoy one last long dream before the little dog should be discovered alone in the drifting boat.

Beyond a bend in the river the tower of an old castle rose above the trees. And behind the castle stretched a long, luxuriant vineyard, while fruit trees and flowers clustered about it.

It was a beautiful scene. Also one of prosperity; and for this reason I was surprised to find, as we rounded the bend of the river, that its bank led up to a ruined wall still standing in front of the castle. I pulled in toward the shore, the better to satisfy my curiosity.

And thereupon the dog began to dance and bark; he seemed very much excited, and as soon as the boat touched shore he disappeared through an opening in the ancient wall.

At that moment something struck the bottom of the boat and bounded toward my feet. It was only a little stone which had apparently fallen from the wall. But I turned it over—and there were the letters "C. R." The long days of sorrow and fasting must have been too much for me, for the last thing I remember was opening the locket and closing it again upon the pebble.

A sweet voice, soft and low, brought me back to consciousness. It was the sort of voice that I knew must have belonged to the woman I loved—a voice I had never heard and which now was stilled forever. It bade a servant hurry and a dog be still.

If She had spoken that way I could understand why the janitor in the newspaper office thought she was the manager. Yet I would have been happy to give a lifetime of obedience to such a voice—had it been Hers.

Cold water touched my brow, I opened my eyes; and I saw that it *was* She. For weeks my Memory had constantly reiterated her beauty, by day and by night Imagination had sought to glorify and idealize it. Yet when I opened my eyes and saw her bending over me I felt ashamed of both Memory and Imagination. They were so inadequate!

I had seen her once before—in a newspaper office in America; and now we sat together in a grand old castle on the Rhine. We hadn't even known each other then, and I had blushed and stammered as I apologized for a blunder; now we were lovers, and neither had to tell the other so. But we did—both of us.

And while we were telling each other the servant hurried out of the room to peek back through the key-hole—and the little woolly dog barked and bounded wildly about, without anybody paying the slightest attention to him. Then she said:

"Dearest, this castle belongs to you and me; and with it an estate more vast than any other on the Rhine. But there's just one little thing that keeps me from being perfectly happy."

"What is it?" I asked. And I, who had stumbled over stepping-stones, and fumbled at opportunities, felt the failures of a lifetime slipping into the past. I was a strong man—I would win happiness for my beloved.

"There is a tradition in our house," she said. "Generations ago a maiden was imprisoned in the tower to prevent her eloping with the man she loved. Her father—a wealthy and powerful prince—was accustomed to walk alone at dusk in the garden in front of his castle. The lover knew this; and bribed a servant to carry a message to the daughter. He asked her to let him know when her father should

enter the garden on a certain night. He told her that was the time he had chosen to rescue her and bear her away to be his wife.

"The appointed night was dark, but the girl from her high chamber could see her father moving about inside the wall, and her lover waiting patiently outside. Cautiously, lest she attract her father's attention, she tossed a little stone from her window.

"That was the signal for her lover to steal over the wall and come to her. In the darkness he could probably not see the stone; yet, to make it more like a missive of love she had carved her initials upon it. Little did she know that the man who was to receive it sought not her love—but her father's life.

"The night wore on. The father returned from his walk; the castle slept; but the girl in the tower paced back and forth and wondered why her lover didn't come.

"As for him, he waited in vain for the signal, and then scaled the wall. He searched through the garden, but he was too late. And when he tried to enter the castle a warder slew him.

"Tradition says the stone never reached him; that the old wall which so faithfully had guarded its people , caught it silently in a crevice among its rocks; and thus treasured as a token of Love a herald of Death. Tradition also says that some day, of its own accord, the wall will surrender its treasure.

"For generations the family has run its course. There have been births and deaths and marriages; prosperity and misfortune, joy and sorrow. Yet every new bride has hoped and prayed that the old wall might bless her with its benediction. For tradition says that perfect joy shall come to her at whose lover's feet the old wall casts the stone. And that thereafter every daughter of the house shall wear it as a jewel at her wedding—a priceless charm to guard against false love.

"Dearest, I love you, and I am very happy! But if only at your coming the old wall had—"

Filled with joy unspeakable I kissed my bride and hugged the little woolly dog. Then I took from my neck the locket, and together we opened it.

That's the end of the story!

* * * * * * *

But you're not satisfied with the ending? Well, neither was I. And so She began to tell me the things you wish to know;—how she obtained my picture, why the little dog and the locket were left on the raft, and how she—beautiful, wonderful She,—could love

insignificant me. She began to tell me, but she didn't have time.

"Wakeville street!" called the conductor.

I scrambled to my feet and alighted from the car—backward. Then I picked myself up and hurried down the street, and didn't stop till I was two doors past my house.

Did you ever dream over something you planned to do? Dream over it until, in imagination, you really did it, over and over—even to the smallest details? Deuce of a bother, isn't it?

My boat sails in five weeks; here's hoping I do, too.

One Thousand Dollars an Inch*

BY CHARLES K. THEOBALD

LDERMAN Smartley of the Fourth, political boss, schemer and grafter—and the erstwhile only baker in Blankly—hated A. B. Blackstone and everybody and everything connected, directly or indirectly, with A. B. Blackstone's bakery. It was not in Aleck Smartley's grasping, selfish nature to do otherwise. For twelve years he had monopolized the business, succeeding by various crooked ways in suppressing competition, until A. B. Blackstone entered the field. That was a severe blow to Alderman Smartley. He was still nursing the sore spot.

Four years ago, when he first learned that Blackstone was contemplating coming to town to open a rival shop, Smartley had quickly gotten busy and established a second bakery. He reasoned that his threatening competitor when he should come to Blankly to size up the situation, would likely consider the population too small to support a third shop.

This subsidiary bakeshop of Alderman Smartley's had been conducted under the name of Carl Holtzner, a good-natured little German, and, at that time, Smartley's head baker.

Smartley had taken the greatest of pains to deceive the public into the belief that he had no connection whatsoever with the new business. He had even succeeded for a time in keeping Holtzner in ignorance of his real purpose.

And Carl Holtzner, who was never so happy himself as when he was doing somebody else a favor, had managed "the branch" in every particular the same as though it were his own, collecting all bills, paying all debts—and with Smartley's bank account in his own name. But, somehow, he finally learned of his employer's knavery, and then he decided he would do Mr. Blackstone a favor.

So it happened that, six months later, when Alderman Smartley of the Fourth returned from New York—whither he had gone to

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buy a new fire engine for the city, and incidentally to pick up a little "side-money" on the deal — he found that Carl Holtzner had sold "the branch" to Blackstone, and had taken himself and his "old mudder" back to Germany.

Thus had Smartley planned his own undoing and lost his subsidiary bakery, for, should he take the matter into court, he must expose his own knavery and become amenable to the law for violating the anti-trust statute. Hence it is easy to understand why he had sworn and was still swearing vengeance against A. B. Blackstone and A. B. Blackstone's business.

But he was merely biding his time, this Aleck Smartley, awaiting a fitting opportunity to "get even" as the saying goes for it was not in his unforgiving nature to submit quietly to defeat—even though he had planned it himself. He was resting after the first round, that was all; for, although four years had passed now since the fight began, he had never conceded this Blackstone fellow—or any other competitor, for matter of that — the right to earn a living selling bread and pies in Blankly.

Nevertheless, those had been four years of prosperity for the Blackstone Bakery. The impetus that Carl Holtzner had imparted to the business, when he first put "Carl's Honest Bread" on the market, gained in force with Blackstone's succession to the modest little shop on Clay Street. In fact, the extent of the business surpassed its proprietor's fondest expectations, and he was now planning to build a modern cracker factory uptown.

After much persuasion, Holtzner had been induced to leave his "old mudder" in Germany and return to Blankly. That was two years ago. Blackstone needed him to superintend his pastry department, and considered himself the luckiest man in town when he got him; for Holtzner knew the business from doughnuts to wedding-cakes — besides, he was honest. Which does not mean to imply that most bakers are thieves.

As fate would have it, the only building site for the factory Blackstone could find that might suit his purpose was a piece of ground abutting a half-acre lot of Aleck Smartley's. The lot was not as large as Blackstone would have preferred it, so he enlisted the services of a friend to negotiate with Smartley for the property. To approach the enemy in person with such a proposition, would be useless he knew full well. Blackstone was averse to quarreling.

"Gus, if I thought for a minute you wanted to buy the ground for yourself," Smartley told the friend, with one of his shrewd-looking, discerning smiles, "you could have it at a bargain. But I happen

to know a thing or two, Gus. You just go back and tell A. B. Blackstone for me that he hasn't got money enough, and never will have enough to buy as much as an inch of that ground." And Gus knew it.

So did Blackstone know it. Such a decision handed down by Alderman Smartley of the Fourth was just as final as a decree handed down by the United States Supreme Court. So Blackstone instructed his architect to make plans for a three-story brick building instead of the lower and wider one he had hoped to have built.

In due course of time the plans were made, the contract let, and work on the cracker factory begun. The walls were scarcely a foot above ground, when a notion, that had been gradually and creepingly gathering in Aleck Smartley's perverse brain, took permanent shape. He paid his architect a visit, and they went together to the lot adjoining Blackstone's, where the architect got busy surveying Smartley's half-acre lot.

The architect seemed to have trouble with his front line, for, during the course of his work, he made a second and then a third measurement of the width of the lot; after each operation he consulted seriously with Smartley.

Whatever the result of these consultations, Smartley was evidently well pleased, for he left the place with a look of supreme satisfaction in his face, and even smiled and bowed pleasantly to Blackstone as he passed him down the street.

Early the following morning the city engineer came with his instruments and his helper, and he, too, made a survey of Smartley's lot; but he measured its width only, from the abutting wall of Blackstone's to the boundary stakes on the vacant lot.

Blackstone crossed leisurely over from the noise and bustle of his rapidly rising cracker factory and inquired tentatively: "Mr. Smartley figuring on selling his lot, Mr. Watson?"

"No, I think not. Told me he is going to build a cracker factory here." Then the city engineer looked at Blackstone almost pityingly. "Mr. Blackstone," he said, "I'd hate to have a man despise me as Alderman Smartley does you—I certainly should."

Blackstone shrugged his shoulders with a gesture of unconcern. "You'd get used to it, Mr. Watson. When is he going to build?"

"Right away, I take it. Said he gave Architect Hansen orders to make plans and specifications for a four-story brick."

So Smartley was going to build a competitive factory! That was why he wouldn't sell the lot! Blackstone smiled grimly. He might

have known it. Well, at any rate, he couldn't prevent it, and if Smartley must renew the fight, why let him.

After that not a day passed that Alderman Smartley's evening walk did not take him in the vicinity of his vacant lot. But to have observed him closely, one would have said that his interest lay in the building of Blackstone's factory rather than in his own adjoining lot, for as the walls grew higher daily Smartley's crafty smile grew correspondingly wider. On the evening of his promenade when he observed that the roof of the building was about completed, he stuck a black cigar skyward between his teeth and made straight downtown for Blackstone's bakery.

Carl Holtzner, his chair tilted at a comfortable angle near the door of the bakery, was enjoying his evening pipe in the open air.

"Pleasant evening, Carl. How's business?"

Holtzner looked the surprise he felt that Alderman Smartley should condescend to speak to him at all, much less in so civil a manner.

"Business all der time gets better, Mr. Schmartley," Holtzner answered. "You doing purty good, too, ain't it?"

"Fairly well, yes. I called to see Mr. Blackstone on a little matter; is he in?"

"He goes yesterday to Chicago to buy for der factory some machineries," Holtzner explained, vaguely wondering what business matters Alderman Smartley could possibly have with his employer. "But maybe I could do, Mr. Schmartley," he suggested.

"Maybe you can, Carl," Smartley returned, with another of his cunning smiles, as he carelessly flicked the ash from his cigar. "It is only a small matter — merely a matter of an inch that Mr. Blackstone's factory occupies on my lot. Please inform him that I need the ground; my proposed building is planned to take the space."

Smartley was half a block up the walk before Holtzner realized the full significance of what he had heard — he was never a rapid thinker. He tossed his apron inside the door, jammed his smouldering pipe in a rear pocket, and raced up the walk, bareheaded, in pursuit.

"Mr. Schmartley!" he cried, when he finally caught up with that elated person at the end of the block, "you didn't mean it, do you? — der factory one inch is on der top of your lot already? And Mr. Blackstone must got to move it? How a three-story brick house he can do dot? It is unpossible!" Here Holtzner scratched the back of his head thoughtfully. "Mr. Blackstone

maybe buys one inch from your lot, Mr. Schmartley," he suggested, brightly.

"Your employer hasn't got money enough to buy an inch of that ground; he has my ultimatum on that point. And as to moving the building, ask me something easier. I am not well enough versed along that line to suggest a plan; but moved it must be — and ground-rent paid until it is moved." With which Alderman Smartley of the Fourth struck a match on the heel of his shoe, calmly lit another cigar, then turned on his heel and resumed his interrupted walk.

Holtzner returned to the bakery the picture of despair. This turn of affairs worried him more, perhaps, than it would have disturbed Blackstone himself. He recalled now having seen the city engineer surveying Smartley's lot, and, knowing its owner as well as he did, he had no doubt that the crafty politician had made sure of his ground before making his threat. Holtzner closed the shop an hour earlier than his usual time that night and took himself posthaste to the telegraph office.

He wasted three telegraph blanks before he got one worded short enough and explicit enough to suit him.

"MISTER A. B. BLACKSTONE," the clerk read,

"IN DER NATIONAL HOTEL, CHICAGO, ILL.

"Der factory we have built one inch too much on Schmartley's lot. We got to move it. We can't. Ground-rent we got it to pay. What I must do, quick? Don't pay for this telegraph; me, I am paying it. *Holtzner.*"

The clerk looked up from the message, smiled, presumably at an imaginary somebody passing the door, as he ran his pencil through the last sentence, and returned twenty-nine cents of Holtzner's dollar.

The following morning Holtzner received a telegram from Chicago:

"Make certain factory is on Smartley's ground," he read. "If so, offer five hundred dollars for title. If offer be refused, have one inch cut from side of building. Home in three weeks.
Blackstone.

"Cut one inch from der wall off?" Holtzner reflected, as he plowed a floury hand thoughtfully through his hair. "Cut one inch from der wall off! Dot costs more as five hundred dollars, I bet me. Suppose once —" and he stopped short, as a happy thought slowly drifted his way. "But I make myself sure first," he concluded, and slipped the telegram in his pocket.

"Fritz!" he called to one of the bakers. "Come mind der shop once; some business I got to see about outside."

At the city hall Holtzner interviewed the city engineer and learned from that official that Smartley had made no false statement. Not satisfied with this, however, he had Blackstone's architect, assisted by the building contractor, resurvey the property. Here the matter was argued pro and con, and, finally, hot and heavy, architect and contractor, each contending that the other was at fault. But wherever the blame lay, the undisputed fact remained that A. B. Blackstone's cracker factory, for one inch of its entire length—one hundred and fifty feet—occupied Aleck Smartley's ground.

Holtzner called the building contractor aside and held a long and animated talk with him, during which the little German, quite contrary to his usual outspoken nature, seemed to be in great fear of being overheard. They walked back and forth and up and down the length of Smartley's vacant lot and discussed the abutting wall of the cracker factory from various angles.

"Now, we keep this by myself and yourself, Mr. Arburg," Holtzner impressed on the building contractor, at the end of their discussion.

Then back to city hall he went again, to look for Alderman Smartley. He found his man in the mayor's office, in a confidential talk with a lawyer. Disregarding the formality of excusing himself, Holtzner interrupted their conversation:

"Mr. Schmartley," he said, very briskly, "five hundred dollars Mr. Blackstone gives you by me for one inch from your ground, which his factory is on it—and not again does he offer it. Now," and Holtzner folded his arms across his chest, "will you take it or won't you?"

Smartley laughed outright. "Not by a damned sight will I take it," then turned his back in Holtzner's face and calmly resumed his interrupted conversation.

Without more ado—unless it were a glint of satisfaction that found expression in his face — Holtzner took his leave. He walked across town again like a man going somewhere in particular and bent on doing something of grave importance when he gets there.

Arrived at the cracker factory, he called the contractor aside once more, and they held another strictly private and somewhat lengthy confabulation, which even the brick wall under discussion could not have heard — if walls, sometimes, have ears.

The following day the only hardware store in Blankly sold com-

pletely out of cold-chisels and heavy hammers, and a score of laborers went to work chipping brick from the north wall of the Blackstone Cracker Factory. But before these men climbed the newly-erected scaffolding, Holtzner had a secret word or two with each of them. And to each of them he gave "hush-money" for some purpose, with the admonition to "keep this by yourself."

It became the town talk, this very remarkable job of partly chipping away an entire side of a three-story brick building in order to meet the headstrong purpose of Alderman Smartley—this fixed resolve of his not to yield an inch to his sworn enemy, A. B. Blackstone.

And it was a tedious job, and one in which Alderman Smartley of the Fourth took great pleasure in covertly watching. Each day he would stroll leisurely past the building, delay awhile to absently watch the grading of his lot, and mentally calculate how much the labor on the opposite wall was lessening A. B. Blackstone's bank account. Every sound of the hammer and chisel was sweetest music to Aleck Smartley's ears. The second round of the fight was on.

The work was completed, however, and the foundation of Smartley's factory well under way before Blackstone returned from Chicago, and Smartley was congratulating himself that the protecting wall of his enemy's would allow a considerable saving of brick in his own adjoining wall.

Carl Holtzner evinced an unusual interest in the erection of Smartley's factory, an interest that seemed to afford him a deal of satisfaction, strange though it may appear. Not a day went by that he did not run a calculating eye over the gradually rising walls, and inwardly chafe at the delay. Indeed, Smartley himself could not have manifested more impatience to see the factory completed.

"Carl," Blackstone inquired one morning, about two weeks after his return, "what is there between you and Contractor Arburg?" There was a slightly troubled expression in Blackstone's frown. "He won't present his bill for the extra work in cutting an inch from the north wall, nor will he tell me the amount. How about it?"

Holtzner shifted his pipe to a new position in his mouth. "Y-es," he returned, evasively, "it's all right, Mr. Blackstone."

"But it isn't all right, Carl," Blackstone asserted, impatiently. "I don't play in business matters, as you know; and now that the factory is completed, I want all bills paid and out of the way."

"Mr. Blackstone," Holtzner inquired, with widely elevated brows, "you have some confidences by me, ain't it?"

"Y-es, Carl, but —"

"Then it's all right," Holtzner broke in, confidently; and then with an air of finality: "Mr. Arburg, after while, brings his bill — and der bill gets paid."

Holtzner would talk no more on the subject after this, and Blackstone, though confident of his employee's loyalty, wondered at the knowing smile which overspread his face whenever the matter was mentioned in the future.

When the roof was on Smartley's factory, Holtzner, wearing his best street clothes and a thoroughly business-like air, strode into Blackstone's office and proudly laid a slip of paper on the desk.

"There der bill is, Mr. Blackstone, for cutting der wall off."

Blackstone glanced at the bill, quite casually at first, then studied it in dismay, then shot Holtzner a frowning look.

"What is the meaning of this, Carl?" Plainly Blackstone was vexed. "According to very careful estimates which I had made in Chicago on the cost of cutting an inch from the wall, five hundred dollars should have been ample. This bill for one thousand dollars is outrageous! Arburg—or somebody—" Blackstone shot Holtzner a searching glance —"is trying to skin me. I absolutely refuse to pay—"

"Just I wanted to show it to you," Holtzner interrupted, mysteriously, and not in the least disturbed. "You don't must got to pay it, Mr. Blackstone—Mr. Aleck Alderman Schmartley pays it, I bet me!" And before the amazed Blackstone could make reply, Holtzner had secured the bill and trotted from the office.

Straight toward Smartley's bakery he went, his smile widening as each block brought him nearer. He found that self-important dispenser of bread and pies and other people's rights, contentedly consuming his after-dinner cigar.

"Mr. Schmartley," Holtzner began, coming to his point at once, "Mr. Blackstone sends me with this bill to collect it."

Smartley wonderingly took the tendered slip and read it. Then he laughed heartily.

"Is your employer fool enough to think I'll pay his bills?"

"Then if der bill you don't like to pay it, Mr. Schmartley," Holtzner returned, calmly, "Mr. Blackstone says your factory you must got to move it from his property off."

Smartley peered sharply into Holtzner's face, vaguely wondering if the little fellow was suffering some mental derangement.